

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING STEVE SPEAR

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Steve Spear of Carol Stream, Illinois, for his outstanding display of service for those in need.

On December 31st, Steve completed his annual Reflection Run to raise money for clean water in Africa through Team World Vision. Each year, Steve celebrates his New Year's Eve birthday by running a kilometer for each year of his life, and is now up to 53, or 32.9 miles. On his most recent Reflection Run, Steve was joined by 25 other runners and their goal was to raise \$10,000, enough to bring clean water to 200 people.

In 2013, Steve left his pastoral position at Willow Creek Community Church to take on an unbelievable task. He ran from Los Angeles to New York, 35 miles a day, 5 days a week, for 5 months, and raised \$500,000. The two days per week he was not running, he was addressing congregations across the country about the importance of following God and looking out for our fellow man. His Reflection Run teammate, Alex Schorr described his passion for helping others best, saying, "Everything Steve does is incredible and inspirational, everything from the Reflection Runs to running across the country. It's never about him. It's always about those he's running on behalf of."

Steve has demonstrated exceptional charity and service, and I am proud to represent him. He is a leader and role model for all Americans. Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending Steve Spear for his extraordinary commitment to those around the world who need our help the most.

IN RECOGNITION OF HEATHER SAWYER AND HER SERVICE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Representative JERROLD NADLER of New York, Representative ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS of Maryland, and Representative JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois, would like to thank Heather Sawyer for a decade of service to the House of Representatives. Heather Sawyer is a brilliant legal mind and incredible litigator. Her calm, clear-eyed professionalism has been instrumental in protecting the rights of marginalized Americans, including Americans with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, people of color, and women. As a senior and trusted counsel, she helped to roll back the worst civil rights abuses of the post-9/11 era.

Heather left the Georgetown Law Center to join the staff of the House Committee on the Judiciary in 2007. She was instrumental in working to pass the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act to ensure that Americans with disabilities have the same protections as every other American. During her tenure on the Committee, she worked with Congressman Nadler to draft the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, which built upon the ADA framework to protect pregnant women who need simple accommodations to stay in the workplace throughout their pregnancies.

Perhaps her most indelible legacy on the Judiciary Committee was her work on marriage equality. Heather worked with Congressman Nadler to draft and introduce the Respect for Marriage Act to overturn DOMA. She also helped draft the congressional amicus brief in the Windsor and Obergefell cases, the two landmark Supreme Court cases that paved the way for marriage equality in the United States.

Heather has always been a true champion of women's rights. For the last year, Heather has served as the Staff Director and General Counsel for the Select Investigative Panel, where she worked tirelessly to protect the rights of women, health care providers, and researchers. She navigated the Panel through a difficult and polarized investigation, and astutely defended the facts and the truth. Heather's command of House procedures and rules helped to ensure that the views of the Democratic Members were represented at every step, and she was instrumental in the Panel's ultimate findings and report. She vigorously fought on behalf of women's right to access reproductive health care services, and her brilliant legal analysis and oversight acumen were invaluable to the Panel.

Heather has never been afraid to go head to head with those who would threaten the rights enshrined in our Constitution. During the Bush Administration, Heather worked to expose illegal interrogation tactics and other human rights abuses. She helped Congressman Nadler write the State Secrets Protection Act and legislation to protect the privacy of electronic communications.

Heather is a bright, strategic, and immensely skilled attorney who has never faced a challenge she could not meet. She dedicated more than two years of her public service as the Chief Counsel for the Select Committee on Benghazi. In that role, she fought to defend the truth, expose procedural excesses, and to provide serious and substantive recommendations to improve the safety and security of Americans serving our country overseas. The Members she has served, the staff who have worked beside her, and the institution as a whole are better because of Heather.

On the most sensitive issues of the day, Heather worked side by side with Members of the Judiciary Committee to ensure that the government adhered to the Constitution and respected the basic human and legal rights of all people. Running through all of this work is Heather's uncompromising sense of justice. She simply will not shy away from a fight.

Whether it was fighting against torture and the use of secret evidence, partisan attacks against Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the Benghazi investigation, or anti-choice partisans who tried to intimidate doctors working on women's health issues.

Heather is a true champion of civil rights and civil liberties and of the Constitution itself and it was truly an honor to work by her side for these many years. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for roll call votes 27 and 30 on Tuesday, January 10, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on roll call vote 27 and I would have voted "yea" on roll call vote 30.

HONORING MR. RICHARD THOMAS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Congressman HUFFMAN, rise today to honor Richard Thomas, the recipient of the 2017 Nick Frey Community Contribution Award. This award was established by the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission in 2013 to recognize members of our community who have made important contributions to grape growing.

A Sonoma County native, Mr. Thomas graduated from Santa Rosa High School, where he was an award-winning member of the Future Farmers of America. He studied agriculture at the University of California, Davis, before going on to work as a vocational agriculture instructor at Healdsburg High School and livestock manager of the Sonoma County Fair.

Mr. Thomas saw Sonoma County's potential for viticulture and became an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College, where he taught thousands of vineyard owners and workers throughout his 28 year career. He enjoys sharing that "God put Sonoma County on earth for one reason: to produce great wines." His past students are now at the helm of many of the great viticulture operations in our Sonoma County wine community today.

Mr. Thomas is a life-long learner and educator. After taking a sabbatical to study wine trellising in New Zealand and Australia, he brought the skills he acquired back to winegrowers in California, helping to shape the look of Sonoma County Vineyards. He has lectured in the United States and around the world, sharing his mastery of grape growing.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.